

1st Peter 3:1-2
Submission in the home part 1

Purpose: to help all begin to understand the Godward roles within marriage

Introduction: Here is how believers can follow in Christ's footprints (2:21) in their home. This addresses **WHAT** women are to do in their marriage relationship.

Why do we need to address such a topic?

- Culturally:
 - Peter writes to people who lived in a Greek and Roman culture where women were expected to worship the same god as their husband, and to have no friends but the friends of her husband. (see the NT era Greek historian Plutarch) Thus, Christian wives were viewed as being a threat to the cultural norm.
 - We too live in a culture that considers Biblical Christianity a threat to the cultural norm.
- Theologically: Genesis 3:16 (cf. 4:7)

- 1) ¹ *Correspondingly* [ὁμοίως] (as the household servants and Christ—2:18-25), *the wives* [γυνή] (i.e. women who have husbands, particularly unsaved husbands),
 - a) Like citizens to ruling authorities (2:13), like household servants to their masters (2:18)
 - b) By entrusting everything about your situation to God
- 2) What are they to be doing?—*be submitting* [pres. pass. ptc. as impv. ὑποτάσσω] *yourselves ...*
 - a) What submission is not:
 - i) Not something just for women
 - All believers are to submit—Ephesians 5:21; Romans 13:1; Hebrews 13:17
 - ii) Not a slave or putting her husband in place of Christ
 - She is free to be all that God wants her to be—Proverbs 31:10-31
 - iii) Not absolute silence, or giving up your personal thoughts/opinions
 - See Proverbs 31:26; Acts 18:26; Judges 13:21-23
 - iv) Not an inactive person, or giving up efforts to influence her husband
 - A wife has many abilities God has given to her—Proverbs 31:10-31
 - v) Not inferiority, in intelligence or competence
 - (1) Christ submitted to His parents—Luke 2:51
 - (2) Christ submitted to the Father—John 5:30; 1st Corinthians 11:3
 - (3) Christ makes all true believers equal before God—Galatians 3:29
 - vi) Not being fearful or timid—1st Peter 3:6

- b) What is submission?
- i) Theologically: The Spirit-enabled, deliberate placing of one's resources at the disposal of one's God-ordained authority for the glory of God.
 - ii) Practically: Why is a grudging submission insufficient?
 - (1) **Because it fails to understand the nature of submission as reflective of the Son's submission to the Father, and the Spirit's submission to the Father and the Son.** In the Trinity, just as the Father takes his responsibility of authority seriously and exercises it with impeccable wisdom and goodness, so the Son and Spirit rendered joyous and glad-hearted submission, always longing to do just what is asked or commanded of them.
 - (2) **Because it does not express what a wife's submission to her husband is meant to reflect,** according to Paul in Ephesians 5. Just as the husband's thoughtful and loving headship reflects Christ's relationship to the church, so the wife's glad-hearted and consistent submission reflects the church's responsibility and privilege of absolute submission before the lordship of Christ.
 - (3) Therefore, the kind of submission the wife is to render to her husband needs to be a joyful, heartfelt, willing, glad-hearted submission. A wife, then, should seek before God to render submission that longs to help, longs to serve, and longs to assist in any way that will be an encouragement to her husband. Just as God calls all of us to submit to authority with a whole heart and willing spirit, so this special calling and privilege is given to wives, to the honor of Christ and his church, and as a reflection of the triune relations within the Godhead." (Ware, *F, S, & HS*, 145)
 - (4) So the question is not, "Is a woman equal to a man?" Rather, it is about the heart attitude of an equal person willingly submitting to their equal for the glory of God. It has to do with function and role, not equality or inferiority.
 - iii) Why is submission so difficult? Because of the judgment upon Eve in relation to the Fall (Genesis 3:16).
 - (1) The wife's desire to control her husband, and the husband's desire to dominate his wife. Only by the Spirit and grace of God is a harmonious marriage possible.
- c) To whom? *to your own* (not someone else's) *husbands* [ἵδιος ἀνὴρ],
- i) The Roman ideal was a marriage of a man of 30 to a young woman of 15.
- d) Why? *so that* [ἵνα] ... *they* (husbands) *will be gained* [fut. pass. ind. κερδαίνω]
- i) Assumption—even if (1st class condition) *some* (husbands) *are refusing to be persuaded by* [pres. act. ind. ἀπειθεῖω] *the Word* [λόγος],
 - (1) They have heard the Word and are currently rejecting the Word. They are rebellious against God, not their wife.

- (2) This is similar to the household servants submitting to masters who are σκολιός (2:18). It is somewhat easier to submit to a husband who is being obedient to the Word, just as it is easier to submit to a nice boss.
- ii) How may the husbands be gained?
 - (1) Negatively, not by the ear—*without a word* [ἄνευ λόγος],
 - (a) No need to nag, verbally prod, badger, or preach to your unsaved husband. Don't be a *noodge* (nag) or a *nudnik* (bore) in Yiddish.
 - (b) However, not all spiritual communication is nagging. Some men just like to call it nagging as they attempt to avoid having to deal with what they know is sinful in their lives.
 - (2) Positively, by the eye—*by means of* [διὰ] *the wives' lifestyle* [γυνή ἀναστροφή],
 - (a) A better course is to live a faithful Christian life, and as they see the transformation of their wives, they're more likely to be inclined to adopt the faith of their wives.
- iii) When may the husbands be gained?—3:2 ²*after having carefully observed* [aor. act. ptc. ἐποπτεύω]
 - (1) A lifestyle of purity—*your^{pl} pure* [ἁγνός] ... *lifestyle* [ἀναστροφή],
 - (a) Physically and mentally loyal to your husband
 - (2) An lifestyle of awe of God—*in awe* [ἐν φόβος] (of God, leading to respect of people),
 - (a) She submits because of her relationship with and trust in God.
 - (3) This submission is limited, not absolute. Thus, if a husband demands his Christian wife engage in sexual immorality or pagan worship (or any sin against her conscience), she should not submit to him.

3) Summary and applications

a) Women:

- i) God expects you to follow these principles, even if your husband never changes.
 - (1) What is your motive for attempting to be a Christ-like wife? Is it to honor God or to only get a “better husband”?
 - (2) Don't be afraid to follow Christ, even if your husband does not. See Hebrews 11:6.
- ii) Don't say, “If I had a better husband, then I'd be a better Christian wife.”
 - (1) Bad behavior can't be blamed on someone else.
- iii) Peter addresses several characteristics of godly wives in this section:
 - (1) Submission, purity, awe of God, non-assertiveness, tranquility, obedience, doing good, not being intimidated
 - (2) Young ladies, set these things as your goals for womanhood.
- iv) By doing so you reflect the image of Christ and the Holy Spirit as They submits to the Father.

b) Men:

- i) Pray for your wife that she would be like this.

- (1) Young men, look for a young woman who is pursuing these things. If she is not, run the other way really fast.
 - (a) A young woman who is not submitting to her father will most likely not submit to her husband either.
 - ii) Live with your wife in an understanding way. These are her battles in the Christian walk. Walk graciously with her.
- 4) **Take-home truth:** God's grace enables Godward submission